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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MARION COUNTY RECOGNIZES NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH AND ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO LEARN THEIR DIABETIC RISK



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OCALA, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County recognizes November as National Diabetes Month, a time set aside every year to raise awareness about diabetes and promote the importance of taking steps to confront diabetes as a critical health issue. The theme for National Diabetes Month this year is “You are the center of your diabetes care team,” highlighting the importance of prevention and self-management.

“Diabetes is one of the significant health challenges our community will continue to face in the years ahead,” said Florida Department of Health in Marion County Health Officer Mark Lander. “The good news is that it’s easy to identify if you are at risk for diabetes, and there are simple changes you can make in your day-to-day life that can help prevent the onset of diabetes or manage your diabetes if you already have it.”

In Florida, it is estimated that more than 2.4 million people have diabetes and more than 5.8 million have prediabetes. Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death for all races and third leading cause of death for black residents in Marion County according to state data. Nationwide, it is the seventh leading cause of death for both men and women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled in the last 20 years in the U.S.

The three most common types of diabetes are Type 1, Type 2 and gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant). Prediabetes can lead to Type 2 diabetes.

- **Type 1 diabetes** is commonly diagnosed in children and young adults, but it's a lifelong condition. If you have this type of diabetes, your body does not make insulin, so you must take insulin every day.
- **Type 2 diabetes** is the most common form of diabetes. In this form the body does not make or use insulin well. If you have Type 2 diabetes, your body generally produces less and less insulin over time. This means that you may need to start using insulin or taking other medications to keep your diabetes in good control.
- **Gestational diabetes** occurs when a woman is pregnant and is caused by a change in the way the body responds to insulin during pregnancy. This change results in elevated

levels of blood glucose. A woman who has gestational diabetes during pregnancy is at greater risk for Type 2 diabetes later.

- **Prediabetes** is when a person's blood glucose levels are elevated but not yet high enough for a diabetes diagnosis. Prediabetes is a serious health condition that increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. It's estimated that 86 million Americans have prediabetes but only one in 10 realizes it. Prediabetics are five to 15 times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes than people with normal blood glucose levels.

A blood test from your health care provider can determine if you have diabetes or prediabetes. Early treatment can prevent serious problems diabetes can cause, such as loss of eyesight, kidney damage, stroke, nerve damage and foot problems. An estimated 8.1 million Americans have diabetes but don't know it. Find out your risk for developing diabetes at <https://doihaveprediabetes.org/>.

There isn't a cure yet for the disease, but a healthy lifestyle can reduce its impact on the lives of those who have it. Thanks to better treatments, people with diabetes are now living longer (and with a better quality of life) than ever before.

The Department of Health in Marion County is involved in diabetes prevention and management in several ways. The department holds Diabetes Education and Empowerment classes and trains community health workers who help clients manage their diabetes or other chronic illnesses. For information on upcoming diabetes classes or community health worker opportunities, please contact Demi Danso-Odei at 352-644-2618. To learn more about diabetes prevention and self-management online, visit www.floridahealth.gov/diabetes.

About the Florida Department of Health

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